

JAMES P. McGOVERN
3RD DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

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COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2103

<http://www.mcgovern.house.gov>

April 3, 2009

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Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
B-2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As you determine priorities for the Fiscal Year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide **\$10 million for the Reach Out and Read (ROR) program** within the Fund for the Improvement of Education (Account: Department of Education-National Projects/Innovation and Improvement).

Reach Out and Read is a national program that promotes literacy and language development in infants and young children, targeting disadvantage and poor children and families. Through fifteen years of peer-reviewed and published research, an extensive body of documentation now clearly demonstrates the importance of promoting early language and literacy skills so that children have the essential reading skills to begin school successfully. Yet today, a large number of children do not receive the necessary support and assistance to develop these skills and begin kindergarten read to learn.

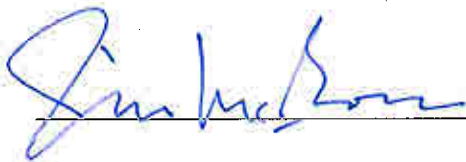
To close this gap, the federal government provides funding for a variety of literacy programs and strategies that reach children and parents, and the professionals who interact with them. ROR has proven to be among the most effective strategies to promote early language and literacy development and school readiness: pediatricians and other healthcare providers guide and encourage parents to read aloud to their children from their earliest years of their life, and send them home from each doctor visit with books and a prescription to read together.

Currently, nearly 50,000 doctors and nurses have been trained in ROR's proven strategies, and more than 3,500 clinics and hospitals nationwide are implementing the program, reaching more than 25% of America's at-risk-children. Funding provided by Congress through the U.S. Department of Education has been matched by tens of millions of dollars from the private sector and state governments.

Over the past several years, the Administration has requested \$10 million for Reach Out and Read in each of its annual budget proposals. In FY 2005, \$10 million was appropriated for ROR; unfortunately, subsequent appropriations were reduced to \$4 million in FY06, \$5.9 million in FY07, and \$4 million in FY 08. In FY 2009, the president requested \$15 million for activities designed to promote early literacy for infants and preschool children, with no specific mention of the ROR program. We request that \$10 million of these funds be provided to ROR, restoring the program to its FY05 funding levels. Restoring the federal element of this extraordinary public-private partnership is essential for reaching 75% of at-risk children currently not being served and helping communities and schools attain their early literacy goals.

We know that you understand the value of the Reach Out and Read program, and we urge you to provide \$10 million in the FY2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Act so that ROR may provide many more of America's children with a strong foundation of early language and literacy skills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim McGovern", written over a horizontal line.

Jim McGovern
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Souder", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Souder
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton

John F. Tierney

Howard L. Berman

Vic Snyder

Baruch Shur

Brad Sherr

Paul Blumenauer

Alvin V. Gutierrez

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John P. ...

Warren Dindig

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Bill Pahlquist

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